

# Commander's Column: **Victory is the Standard**

**O**n June 14th we celebrated our Army's birthday. The standard for any Army is Victory, and few in history can match the American Army's 228 years of success. This standard began during the Revolutionary War when our Army was a loose collection of individuals committed to the radical notion that a government should serve the people, and not the other way around.

As we did in our earliest days, 7th ATC continues to uphold this standard of victory today. We proved this with our role in providing a highly professional force that efficiently and effectively freed the Iraqi people from a brutal dictator. We here in the 7th Army Training Command can take tremendous pride in the important role we have played in keeping our Army victorious. It is a testament to our unrelenting tenacity and unmatched flexibility as a major training command and one of the Army's premier combat training centers.

As we move into another summer time rotation period, that flexibility will once again be showcased as we bid farewell to some key personnel in our command, and welcome the fine soldiers who will arrive to take their place. Someone once said that the only thing that remains constant in this world is change, and while that may be partially true, I believe that one thing we can count on to remain constant is the dedication and commitment to excellence of the soldiers who wear the uniform of the United States Army and the patch of the 7th Army Training Command.

As soldiers in today's Army, our ability to remain flexible is more important now than possibly at any time in our history. Our ability to react to change is what makes us great. As leaders, we have looked at the changing responsibilities facing soldiers within USAREUR, and as they will no doubt adapt to change, so must we adapt our ability to train them.

One way we will do this is by adopting a new 25-day rotation model for units

training at the Combined Maneuver Training Center.

This new rotation model will realign the way task force elements go into the CMTC for force-on-force maneuver training. Under the old model, battalions would enter their training in three staggered task force teams, which overlapped at the beginning and end of the rotation with brigade operations. This plan meant that Observer Controller and OPFOR augmentation requirements were extended; slice battalion elements such as artillery and engineers were separated from their parent command for longer periods; and brigade and battalion level headquarters elements were spending significant, and in some of our minds, detrimental time at the Combat Maneuver Training Center.

The new rotation will have two battalions enter the box simultaneously for task force and brigade operations. This new 25-day model will mean that battalion and company commanders will have more time at home station to prepare for rotations and more time to implement lessons learned in the local training areas following rotations. Finally, almost everyone will experience fewer requirements to provide augmentees during a rotation.

The third task force of each brigade combat team will be afforded an increased opportunity to deploy to the East for a major training event on the unfamiliar terrain of some of our newest NATO allies. These out of sector training opportunities will provide a terrific training event while allowing us to forge new partnerships in places like Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

This summer is going to be an especially busy season, packed with training requirements, transitions, and a continued eye toward force protection vigilance. These things are still very important, but it is also important that you take some time for yourselves and your family to relax, perhaps travel, or just stay at home and take it easy.



*photo by Spc. Kristine S. Smedley*

But remember that something else typically comes along with the summer season – an increase in vehicle accidents. We lost one of our 7th ATC soldiers recently to a tragic motorcycle accident, and while we don't know all of the facts about what caused the accident, we do know that off-duty, privately owned vehicle accidents continue to rank as the Army's number-one killer. Over 70 percent of Army off-duty fatalities are a result of POV accidents, and in the majority of these accidents speed, fatigue, alcohol, and failure to wear seatbelts were the biggest contributing factors.

I challenge all members of the 7th Army Training Command to get actively involved in preventing and reducing on and off-duty accidents. I ask leaders, soldiers and civilians at all levels to emphasize safety awareness as we move into this summer season. Your proactive and timely involvement now will significantly enhance our command safety posture by protecting America's finest – the soldiers, civilians, and family members of the 7th ATC!

Have a great summer.

**Train to Win!**

**Robert M. Williams**  
**Brigadier General**  
**Commander, 7th ATC**